

A B S T R A C T

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Stacks of pieces (24) are cut out from the lay-up (20) on a cutting table, on the basis of recorded information relating to the locations of the pieces on the surface of the lay-up, and the skeleton (26) of the lay-up is split up (lines 28) into a plurality of portions while the stacks of pieces are being cut out. Then the lay-up is brought onto an unloading table (60) for successively unloading the stacks of cut-out pieces by causing an unloading tool (80) to move so as to bring it into contact with the stacks that have arrived on the unloading table, by using information relating to the locations of the pieces, and so as to take off each stack from the remainder of the lay-up merely by moving it substantially parallel to the plane of the lay-up, without interfering with the stacks of pieces that have not yet been unloaded.

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Translation of the title and the abstract as they were when originally filed by the Applicant. No account has been taken of any changes that may have been made subsequently by the PCT Authorities acting ex officio, e.g. under PCT Rules 37.2, 38.2, and/or 48.3.